

# *President of European Parliament Favors Closer U.S.-Cuba Links*

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Brussels, December 19 (RHC) -- The President of the European Parliament, Martin Schulz, described as positive the restoration of relations between Cuba and the United States, an approach that, he said, will also benefit Europe.

According to the senior official the decision that "Washington and Havana restart bilateral relations could open the way to the European Union for a closer economic approach, much deeper with the Caribbean nation."

Schulz recalled that he was always part of the group that had "requested this step of reconciliation in the last ten years, because this way we can put things in order and eliminate some hypocrisies of the past, when the EU imposed restrictions on Cuba while some of its member countries maintained relations," he said.

Wednesday, the President of Cuba, Raul Castro, and his U.S. counterpart, Barack Obama, publicly announced their willingness to begin the normalization of relations between the two countries, broken since 1961 when Washington imposed a tight economic, commercial and financial blockade on Havana.

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